

Minutes from the WeCAN Meeting held at Westfield City Hall Assembly Room on
June 30, 2009 at 7 pm.

Disclaimer: I hope you will find these notes helpful. They are not a complete representation of the meeting, but rather the highlights of topics discussed. Feel free to contact me at Westfield City Services Center (317) 804-3002 if you have any questions. -TB

June 30, 2009

Agenda

- I. Announcements
- II. Future of Westfield Series – Parks Department
- III. Proposed Smoking Ban
- IV. Foreclosures
- V. Ending Announcements

I. Announcements

The next WeCAN Meeting will be Tuesday, July 28th.

Grand Junction Derby - Direct your residents to www.dwna.org for the flyer and official entry form. Deadline for entries is July 31, 2009. Start building your car for your neighborhood or business!!

Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) - Ron Rothrock spoke about the importance of CERT. To learn more about CERT, please view the informational handout. The purpose of CERT is to support the Police and Fire Departments in the event a disaster strikes and the Westfield Ready program would need to be deployed. In the event of a disaster, police and fire are the first responders and CERT acts as pre-first responders. CERT volunteers are in the neighborhoods or may be able to get to areas easier than public safety. Police and fire may not be able to reach the incident because of physical restrictions (obstructions in roads) or are helping elsewhere in the community. It would be ideal to have at least one CERT volunteer in each neighborhood. Please email me if you are interested in becoming part of CERT. The next training class will start this fall. Dates and times have not been determined.

Please fill out the [Neighborhood Hub Survey](#). So far, I only have received information from the following neighborhoods: Ashfield; Bridlewood; Centennial; Cherry Wood; Merrimac; Springdale Farms; and Village Farms, Inc.

It was stressed that the “It’s never going to happen to me” attitude is not the correct response. Disasters happen, even in Indiana. Tornados and ice storms are real threats. You are encouraged to get involved so you will know how to react and take care of your family as well as your neighbors and your community.

II. Future of Westfield Series – Westfield Parks Department

Melody is very passionate about the parks and trails in Westfield. She is currently the only official Parks Department employee with a little help from the Public Works Department. The first annual Westfield in Bloom competition was very successful with 43 participants. Downtown is evidence of all the hard work Westfield in Bloom has put in to make Westfield Beautiful.

There are 14 parks in Westfield covering over 140 acres. Some of them are developed and others are not. View the [slideshow](#) to see pictures and addresses of all the parks. Also view the [Interactive Parks and Trails Map](#). We have a splash park and basketball goals at Quaker Park, a sledding hill being built at Simon Moon Park, equestrian trails at Raymond Worth Park, and ideas for an inclusive playground (where handicapped children can play next to other children). For the parks that have Shelters, you can rent them for \$15 for 4 hours. Many are almost booked for the summer but please call Customer Service at 804-3150 to check availability.

The trails here in Westfield are linear parks. On June 6th close to 200 people showed their support for the Dedication of the Alyn Bernell Mile, the first mile of the Monon Trail in Westfield from 146th to 156th Street. Before the end of the summer, the trail should be complete up to 161st Street. Also, a three-tiered drinking fountain should be installed in a month. By the end of the year, the trail should be extended to the Midland Trace Trail, just South of SR 32. Much of the land needed to build the trail is being generously donated by residents and business owners. A federal grant has also been secured to obtain right of way from SR 32 all the way North to the Township Line; the caveat is that the funds will not be given until 2012.

The Grand Junction Plaza will be a destination, a place to bring visitors who come in town. It is still in the design phases but will be great when it is complete!

Donations by Developers and HOAs are a mixed blessing. The developer or HOA might want to donate land because it is unable to be developed on or they do not want to maintain it. If the City decides to take the property, the City would be asked to make decisions about events held at those sites that are potentially in the middle of a neighborhood. There are potential problems such as noise, parking, and increased traffic that the City would like to avoid. The Parks Department is developing a five year park plan with policies for land donation that would make ensure that the land is consistent with Westfield's vision.

Safety on the Monon – A bicycle and car accident occurred recently on the Monon and 146th Street. All the safety precautions, above the standard requirements, have been in place. The bicyclist failed to stop at the crossing. Trail users are encouraged to caution others that there is a busy street ahead when coming to 146th. When funds become available, adding additional safety measures will be considered.

Over one quarter of the Westfield Police Department Patrol Division are equipped to be on bike patrol. Bicycle Police Officers will be available on every shift. They will be on the trail, especially during peak hours of Friday, 4pm-8pm; Saturday, Noon-8pm; and Sunday Noon-4pm. The weekend bike patrols are in addition to normal patrols.

III. Proposed Smoking Ban

The Westfield City Council Members have been receiving hundreds of emails amounting to approximately a 3 to 1 majority in favor of the ban. Many come from families with children. If the state passed the ban, the smoking ban wouldn't be such a big concern to businesses. Since the state did not pass the ban, restaurants and bars are the contested issue. Should it be up to the owner of the business? Should all restaurants that serve children be non-smoking? What about filtration systems that filter the smoke out of the air? The proposed ban proposes a way to address the general health issue as well as the image of Westfield as the Family Sports Capital of America. Some feel the City would not be able to enforce the language in the ordinance prohibiting employees to smoke in vehicles or other enclosed facilities. Enforcement would be based on complaints. Click here to read the [Ordinance](#) in full. The Councilors are still interested in what residents have to say. Please email them and encourage your neighbors to email them at CouncilMembers@westfield.in.gov.

IV. Foreclosures

When a house becomes vacant, it usually becomes an eyesore. The lawn care suffers, paint chips, and the cracked blinds can be seen through the windows. Below is a [City Ordinance](#) that outlines the violation.

Sec. 34-92. Duty of owner to keep weeds, grass or other vegetation cut and/or removed. It shall be the duty of any owner of real estate within the geographical limits of the city to cut and remove all weeds growing upon such real estate when such **weeds exceed a height of 12 inches**, as measured from the ground, including but not limited to that portion of such real estate that is adjacent to, or abutting any sidewalk, alley or street.
(Ord. No. 96-30, § 1(8.06.020), 12-9-96)
State law references: Violations on private property, IC 36-1-6-2; removal of weeds and rank vegetation, IC 36-7-10.1.

If the grass is not cut, the Code Enforcement Officer in the Community Development Department, Jack Spaulding, will get in contact with the banks that own the property. If the banks do not respond to the first request to mow, they get a second call. The process does take a while so you may want to check your covenants to see if there is anything you can do. Some covenants specify that after notification, HOAs can take care of the property.

In addition to the lost dues to the HOAs, there is a potential public health issue. When the homes are abandoned and the power is switched off, the sump pump doesn't function and mold will result. The cycle then is that no one will buy the home and it will remain vacant for longer. There has to be a complaint in order for the City to enter the home.

City representatives will be present at the July 28th WeCAN Meeting to discuss the issue further.

V. Closing Announcements

WeCAN Moving Forward

WeCAN meetings will now run from **7-8:30pm** instead of 7-9pm. The reduced time will hopefully lead to higher attendance. The number of topics per month will be scaled down to 1-2 to meet the shorter time frame, with at least one “hot” topic. The Future of Westfield Series will also be scaled back to 15-20 minutes and may not be every month. The agenda will be set earlier so that everyone has a chance to think about the material before the meeting. Check the WeCAN page the week before the meeting for the agenda, although it may be up sooner.

What: WeCAN

Date: Monthly on the last Tuesday of each month

Time: **7-8:30pm**

Where: Westfield City Hall Assembly Room

If you have questions/suggestions, please email Tammy at tblackburn@westfield.in.gov.

Thank you!